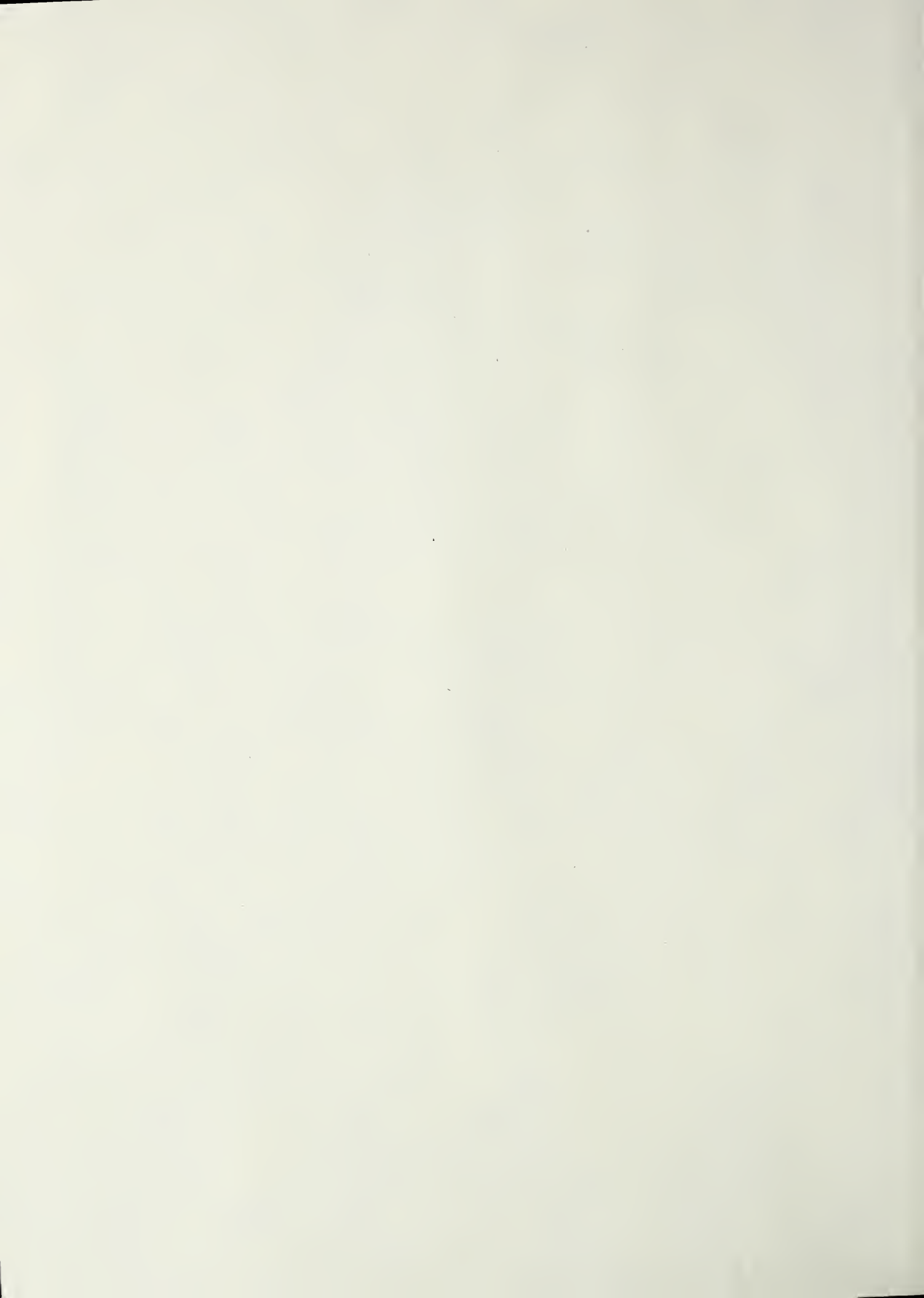




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**12th Annual
National Prison Braille Forum
October 10, 2012**





The mission of the National Prison Braille Network (NPBN) is twofold:

- To support and promote braille production facilities in prisons across the U.S. as major sources of high quality braille and experienced braille transcribers,
- To help ensure that inmate transcribers are well prepared for successful careers as braille transcribers upon release.



facts about: } Vision & Blindness

Hope for the Future:

- NEI-funded research suggests that increasing omega-3 fatty acids in the diet of premature infants could prevent or decrease severity of retinopathy of prematurity by protecting against abnormal blood vessel growth.*
- Breakthroughs in identifying gene variations in age-related macular degeneration could result in new screening tests and preventive therapies for the leading cause of blindness in older Americans.**

SOURCE: *CONNOR, K.M. ET AL. NATURE MEDICINE 2007, 13: 868-873.

**NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE

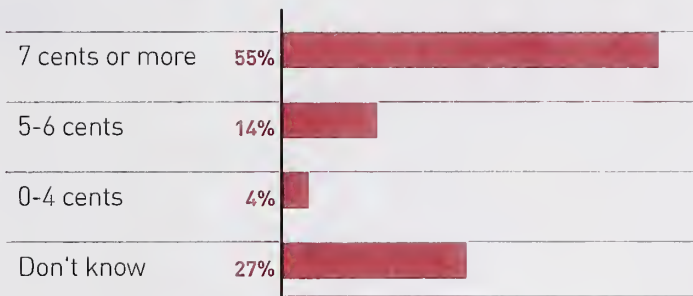
The Bottom Line:

More than 38 million Americans age 40 and older are blind, visually impaired or have an age-related eye disease, and the number is only expected to grow as the population ages. Increased investment in eye and vision research is needed now to help reduce the number of visually impaired Americans and the costs associated with treating and caring for them.*

SOURCE: *THE EYE DISEASES PREVALENCE RESEARCH GROUP, ARCHIVES OF OPHTHALMOLOGY 2004, 122(4).

Americans Want More Spent on Medical and Health Research

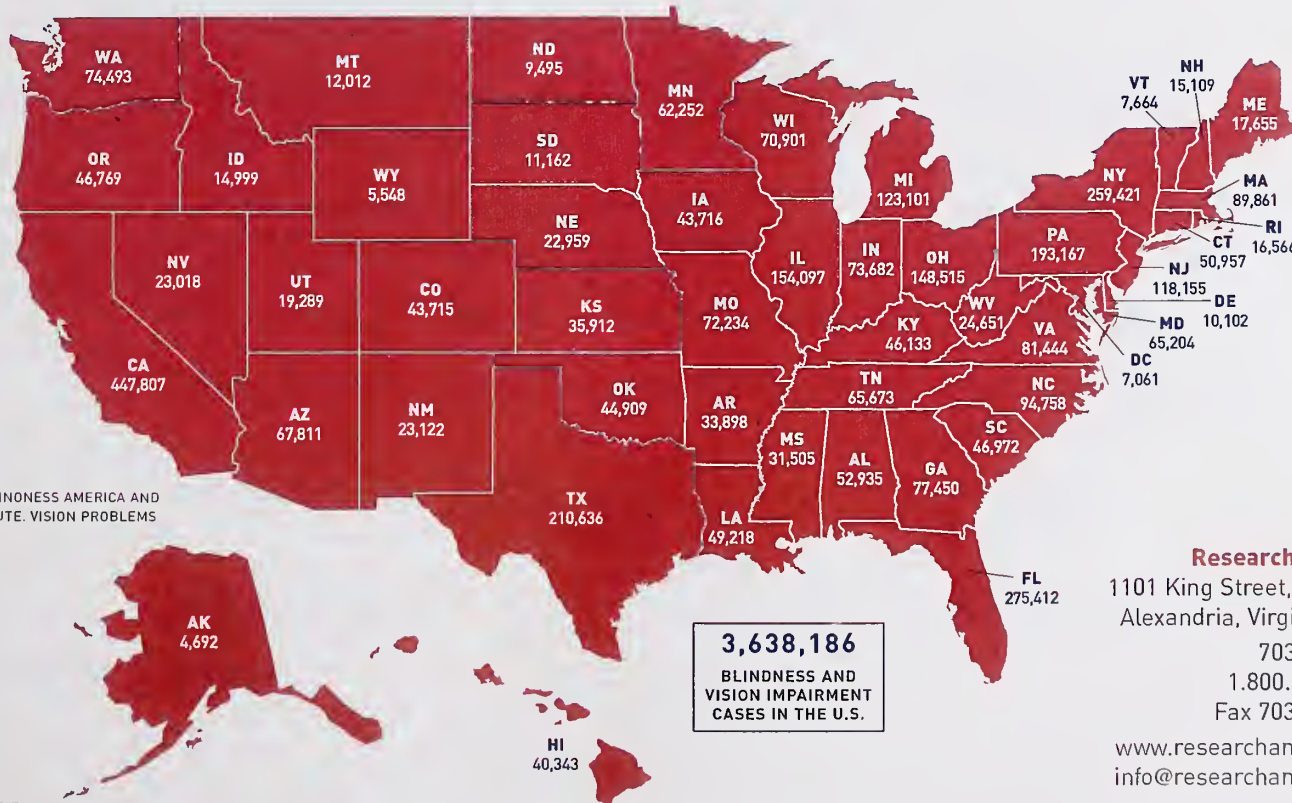
Currently, about 6 cents of each health dollar spent in the U.S. is spent on medical and health research. How many cents of each health dollar do you think we SHOULD spend?



SOURCE: TRANSFORMING HEALTH POLL, 2007

CHARLTON RESEARCH COMPANY FOR RESEARCH!AMERICA

Cases of blindness and vision impairment in Americans 40 and older



SOURCE: PREVENT BLINDNESS AMERICA AND NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE. VISION PROBLEMS IN THE U.S. 2008.

Research!America

1101 King Street, Suite 520
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
703.739.2577
1.800.366.CURE
Fax 703.739.2372
www.researchamerica.org
info@researchamerica.org

For additional information, contact
National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research at 240.221.2905
OR www.eyeresearch.org

Lasker/Funding First is a founding partner in this series of fact sheets. Lasker/Funding First is the medical and health research policy program of the Mary Woodard Lasker Charitable Trust. www.laskerfoundation.org

2012 National Prison Braille Forum

Coombs Chandler Room, Galt House Hotel

October 10, 2012

Agenda

7:45 am	Registration and continental breakfast	
8:30	Welcome	Nancy Lacewell
	National Prison Braille Network	Becky Snider
	Introduction of stipend recipients	Nancy Lacewell
	Individual program updates	Jane Thompson
	National Braille Association (NBA) update	Jan Carroll Dorothy Worthington
	Second Chance Act project update <i>PROFITT: Providing Real Opportunities for Income Through Technology</i>	Tamara Rorie
11:45	Deli buffet lunch – Breathitt Room	
1:00	"Reflections of a Prison Braille Program Founder and Coordinator"	Marie Amerson
	Second Chance Act project update <i>MAMP: Miami Accessible Media Project</i>	Robert Eutz
	APH Accessible Textbook Department update	Jane Thompson
	Braille Authority of North America (BANA) update	Mary Nelle McLennan Judy Dixon
	DIAGRAM Center, POET software	Jim Downs Fred Slone
	Group Discussion	Nancy Lacewell
5:00 pm	Adjourn	



2012 National Prison Braille Forum

Roster by State

October 10, 2012

Arkansas

Cindy Wilkinson

California

Mike Bastine

Sandra Greenberg

Peggy Schuetz

Vanessa Stenz

Bob Walling

Patty Biasca

Ruth McKinney

Fred Slone

Delaware

Anne Lattanzi

Dorothe Mumford

District of Columbia

Judy Dixon

Georgia

Marie Amerson

James Downs

Carey Jackson

Tamara Rorie

Georgia (cont.)

Chris Smith

Bill Terry

Guy Toles

Patrick Fraser

Raminta Zebrauskas

Indiana

Juan Cordova

Leslie Durst

Robert Eutz

Paul Randolph

Betsy Scott

Mark Sevier

Michael Frye

Qyn Boswell

Iowa

John Romeo

Kentucky

Jamie Beard

Jan Carroll

Jason Criswell

Justin Gardner

Kentucky (cont.)

Jayma Hawkins
Cheri Kraus
Gail Kubovchik
Nancy Lacewell
Catherine Leslie
Mary Nelle McLennan
Becky Snider
Jane Thompson

Louisiana

Robin Coxe-Harris

Massachusetts

Sara Chmielewski
Nicole Tuttle

Michigan

Robert Beaton
Tyler Colton
Matthew Williams

Minnesota

Dorothy Worthington

New Mexico

Alicia "Lissie" McAninch

North Carolina

Cindy Belue
Penny Evans
Julie Kagy
Rebecca Viggiano

Ohio

Jeffrey Friedlander
Paula Mauro
Gene Mezeske
Jo Morell
Donald Morrow

Oregon

Bob Disher

South Carolina

Shawn Anderson
Amanda Clayton
Jill Ischinger
Robert Speer

South Dakota

Connie Sullivan

Washington

Richard Flores
Kandi Lukowski

West Virginia

Donna See

Wisconsin

Kurt Pamperin

Wyoming

Chris Lansford
Allison Marshall

REPORT TO THE NATIONAL PRISON BRAILLE FORUM

Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Instructional Resource Center

Wrightsville Braille Project

October 2012

My name is Cindy Wilkinson. Because I have a condition which makes it impossible for me to project my voice, I have prepared this summary of the past year's Wrightsville Braille Project's activity.

I am Director of the Instructional Resource Center (IRC) at the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ASBVI) in Little Rock, Arkansas. As such, I also supervise the Wrightsville Braille Project (WBP) at the Wrightsville Correctional Facility in Wrightsville, Arkansas, which was established in 1984.

2012-2013 School Year

The Instructional Resource Center currently serves a total of one hundred fifty three (153) students:

Seventy-nine (79) are public school students in various districts around the state. Twenty-three (23) of these students are Braille readers, and fifty-six (56) require large print materials. Eighty-four (84) students attend ASBVI, twenty (20) of whom are Braille users.

The Wrightsville Braille Project provides an invaluable, and exclusive, service to the blind and visually impaired students of Arkansas, providing educational materials not otherwise available in the required format. Currently at the project, there are six (6) certified Braille transcribers, one (1) of whom is also

certified in Nemeth, and two (2) inmates who work exclusively on large print production. The Project does not currently provide or market materials to schools, organizations, or entities aside from ASBVI's Instructional Resource Center.

All books to be produced in Braille are scanned, embossed, and bound on site. Thus far for the 2012-2013 school year, the WBP has produced sixty (60) books in Braille format, of which fifty-six are were new Braille transcriptions, and four (4) embossed transcriptions, accounting for 39,962 Braille pages.

Additionally, for the 2012-2013 school year, sixty-five (65) titles have been produced in large print format at the Braille Project. Large print volumes are shipped unbound to the IRC where they are bound using a Fastback 15xs book binder.

To assure the continuation of top quality production, over the past year the Wrightsville Braille Project has been provided with updated computers and software, flat screen monitors, as well as a new laminator.



The mission of the National Prison Braille Network (NPBN) is twofold:

- To support and promote braille production facilities in prisons across the U.S. as major sources of high quality braille and experienced braille transcribers,
- To help ensure that inmate transcribers are well prepared for successful careers as braille transcribers upon release.

Network Services

- ✓ Centralized communication and professional development via a webpage (www.aph.org/pbf), email and U.S. mail correspondence with members, network gatherings (such as the annual National Prison Braille Forum and periodic focus groups), and the use of webcasts, teleconferences, and a listserv when appropriate.
- ✓ A source of information and educational materials related to braille production facilities inside prisons and to individual prison braille programs across the country. Publications to date include:

National Prison Braille Directory (2004, suc2009)

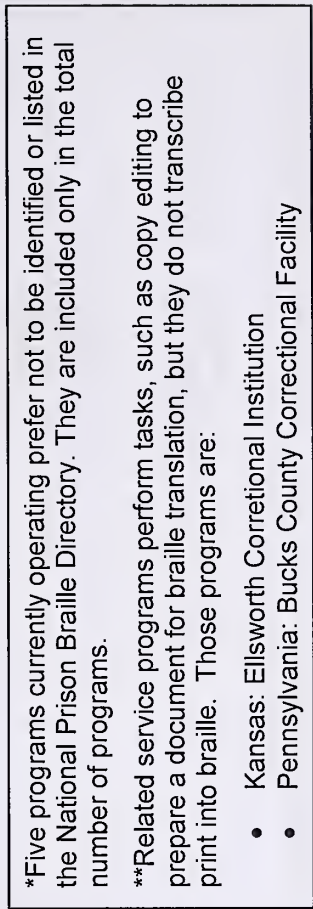
Guidelines for Starting and Operating Prison Braille Programs (2009)

- ✓ Support for individual programs, such as the distribution of news releases highlighting program accomplishments, and letters of support for expansion plans, grant applications...
- ✓ Braille work referral: passing braille jobs along to others in the network when production capacity is reached, and helping programs secure braille jobs when possible.
- ✓ Training and consultation within prisons through staff visits, presentations, transcriber workshops, meetings with corrections staff, and electronic programs via the internet.
- ✓ Support for the Building Bridges with Braille reentry initiative, designed to prepare qualified offenders for employment as braille transcribers upon release, and to assist with their transition when appropriate.

Across the United States

37* programs in 28 states

Highlighted programs are in the development phase.

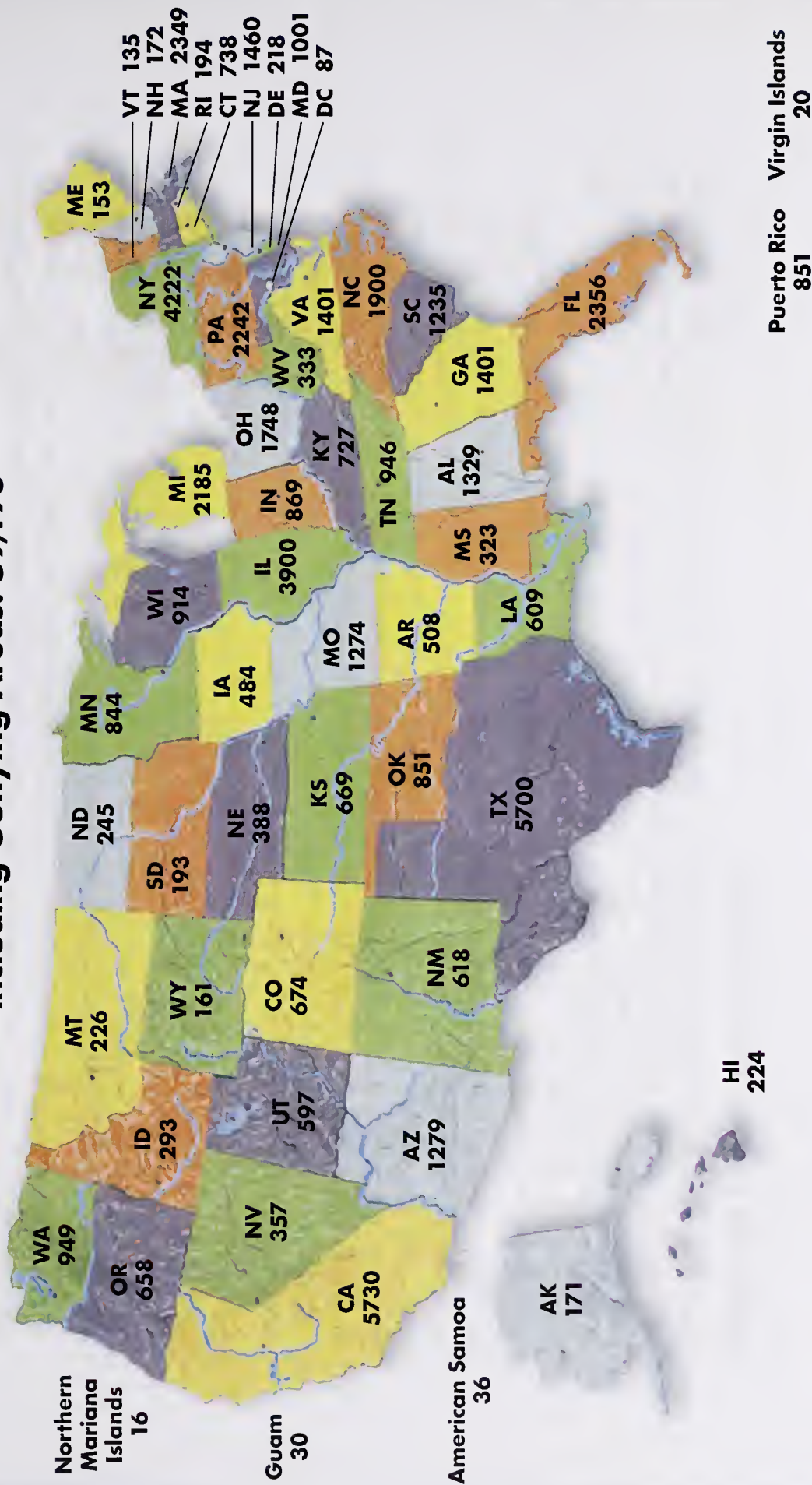


Act to Promote the Education of the Blind of 1879

Number of Blind and Visually Impaired Students Registered in the Federal Quota Program

As of January 2011

Total Students in the United States,
including Outlying Areas: 59,193



About the Federal Quota Program

The Federal Act to Promote the Education of the Blind was passed by Congress in 1879 to provide adapted educational materials to eligible students working at less than college level who meet the definition of blindness. An annual registration of eligible students determines a per-capita amount of money designated for the purchase of educational materials produced by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH). These funds are credited to Federal Quota accounts, which are maintained and administered by APH and its Ex Officio Trustees (EOTs) throughout the country.

APH is responsible for the overall administration of this law, which is accomplished through a network of professionals designated as EOTs. These professionals are the heads of residential schools for the blind; chief state school officers of each state department of education; heads of private, nonprofit schools for the blind; heads of programs for students who are multiply disabled; and heads of rehabilitation agencies. EOTs in each state and outlying area are legally entrusted with the administration of the Federal Quota Program for students within their systems. All orders for materials to be purchased with Federal Quota funds must be directed through Ex Officio Trustees.

For over 130 years, the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind has been affecting positive change in the lives of Americans who are visually impaired. Through materials that range from accessible books to fine motor development materials, from braille writing equipment to talking computer products, and with assistance from an outstanding network of Ex Officio Trustees, APH and the Act address the specific learning needs that a vision loss creates.

The purpose of the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind is to place the most appropriate educational aids, tools, and supplies in the hands and lives of every student below college level who is visually impaired or blind.



American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.
800.223.1839 • info@aph.org • www.aph.org

REENTRY SUCCESS THROUGH TRAINING AND TECHNOLOGY

BY **PATRICK FRASER**, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, PROVIDING REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCOME THROUGH TECHNOLOGY (PROFITT), ALTERNATIVE MEDIA ACCESS CENTER (AMAC), GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

In these tight economic times, addressing the employment needs of offenders slated for impending release can be quite a challenge with limited resources and support systems in place. But one new training program set up at the maximum security Mountain View Unit in Gatesville, TX is working to change that reality. Providing Real Opportunities for Income through Technology (PROFITT), a Second Chance Act project funded by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, is a grant collaboration that is establishing a model curriculum geared at positioning offenders for sustainable income upon release. Georgia Institute of Technology's Alternative Media Access Center (AMAC), the National Braille Press, and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) have been collaborating on the effort, and have created a five-track comprehensive curriculum whereby offenders learn skills that will greatly assist them upon release. PROFITT has been piloting the curriculum at TDCJ's Mountain View Unit, where Texas Correctional Industries (TCI) maintains a braille production center. While the PROFITT project focuses on training in a specific vocation ... braille transcription ... the curriculum has been designed as five independent tracks to provide maximum flexibility in delivery. Each track may be used in a variety of settings throughout Correctional Industries in support of multiple vocations. The curriculum developers envision that the program can be replicated and customized in many settings, having a positive impact on prisoner reentry success for years to come.



A transcriber at TDCJ's Mountain View Unit displays the anatomy tactile graphic she has created.

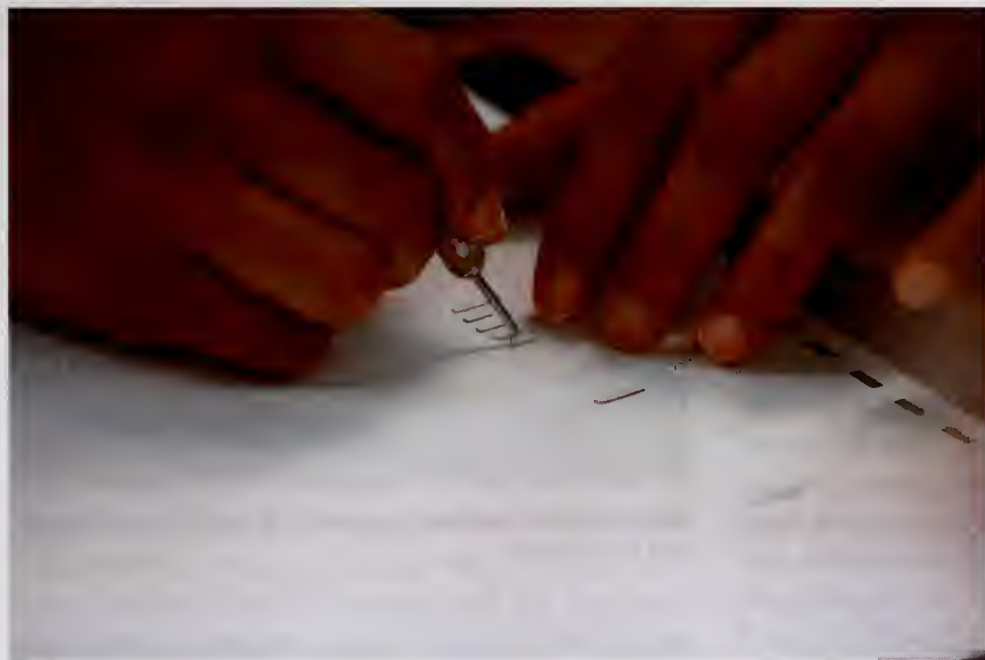
Why Braille?

Braille is a system of raised dots to represent characters, words and portions of words that can be read by blind and visually-impaired persons. Braille has been compared to stenographer's shorthand, and includes several levels of higher certification for mathematics, tactile graphics, textbook formatting and even music. Braille is literacy for people who are visually impaired. People can listen to a book through a recording or screen reader, but they are not really grasping the full notions of spelling and grammar that are the basis for language and communication. Tactile graphics produced in braille allow a fuller understanding of the material, and this is especially important to students.

Prison Braille Programs: An Overview

There are currently over 35 prison braille programs across the country, many of which are managed by state Correctional Industries. In addition to preparing offenders for an occupation upon release, the programs provide braille textbooks and other materials mandated by federal law for students attending K-12 schools and other organizations at a low cost, that saves states a great deal of money. Braille production also provides trainees with a strong sense of purpose, which is a common assertion of those who have completed training. Braille transcription is difficult to learn, and there is an unmet need for people trained to produce braille materials who have advanced certifications. Braille is an excellent

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

A close-up look at tactile graphic creation. Notice the Braille text also on the page.

vocation for prison training programs because it requires extensive instruction, dedicated time and practice. Braille transcription is often done by independent contractors who receive and deliver their work via the Internet. This employment structure is helpful to ex-offenders, whose employment opportunities may otherwise be limited by their criminal records. Anecdotal research indicates that the recidivism rate of qualified inmate braille transcribers across the country is between zero and three percent (via the National Prison Braille Network).

The PROFITT Curriculum

The PROFITT program includes 750 hours of hands-on classroom training over a period of about 30 weeks. An expansion of earlier braille training programs, PROFITT also teaches broader professional skills, including computer operation and computer graphics, small business management and "soft skills" designed to help ex-offenders work as independent consultants. The curriculum's five tracks include basic computer skills, soft/life skills training, literary

braille transcription, tactile and advanced computer graphics, and finally small business management. With the enhanced curriculum that has been catered directly to the unique challenges of instruction within the prison environment, PROFITT strives to improve existing braille production facilities, and also encourage the development of new prison braille programs. The curriculum is instructor-based, but utilizes many multimedia components, including videos, PowerPoint presentations, and hands-on activities designed to keep the curriculum dynamic and fun. The PROFITT pilot project, which wrapped up in July 2012, provided the curriculum development process with excellent feedback from instructors and participants. Offenders at the Mountain View Unit even participated in the creation of the curriculum, as several of them have advanced certifications possessed by few people across the nation. "The braille program has given transcribers a reason for being, and it gives them a reason to get up every morning because they love doing what they are doing and they love seeing the finished product," said Delores Billman, Industry Supervisor at the Mountain View Prison. "They

Continued from page 10

certainly like to know that someone is using what they have done to better themselves.”

The curriculum has also been designed to allow for a great deal of flexibility in its implementation. Facilities and instructors will have the ability to assess the skills and needs of participating offenders, and can focus on areas where offenders need special focus. For example, some trainees may be quite familiar with basic computer hardware and software, but they may have never had a chance to learn how to create Excel spreadsheets or PowerPoint presentations. Activities such as designing a resume and cover letter reinforce computer skills while also instilling basic life skills. Through this curriculum, they will have the opportunity to greatly expand their knowledge-base, and have a better chance for success post-release.

Successful Re-Entry: A Story of Success

Carey Jackson is one example of how prisoner education and braille programs can change lives for the better. Mr. Jackson was incarcerated at Scott State Prison in Georgia in 2004, where he started working in the braille program as a way to get out of the dorms. While he says he struggled with braille transcription at first, Mr. Jackson stuck with the program and became captivated by the process. “Braille is not in itself hard, but the concept of grasping dots as words takes time and patience. I am extremely glad for the skills I learned while incarcerated, and cannot imagine my life being where it is today without the opportunities I had there.” While the Georgia braille program is not part of Georgia Correctional Industries, the initiative is a great example of how partnerships can be forged in creating re-entry success. The Georgia Braille Transcribers (GBT) program is a collaborative effort between the Georgia Department of Corrections, the Georgia Department of Education, and Middle Georgia Technical College



Carey Jackson, Braille Coordinator at AMAC, with his wife and young son

intended to provide an opportunity for offenders to learn braille transcription and create other accessible materials for print-disabled students, such as large print and electronic textbooks. The program provides books in braille for K-12 students in Georgia free of charge, thus saving the state thousands of dollars annually. The program merged two existing braille units in Georgia prisons, and is now located at Central State Prison in Macon, GA.

After earning advanced braille certifications in prison, Mr. Jackson began contracting as a braille transcriber upon release in 2009. His focus and determination eventually led him to become a full-time employee at the Georgia Institute of Technology’s Alternative Media Access Center, where he is now the Braille Coordinator. His story serves as a shining example to offenders in Georgia and Texas, where he provided encouragement and feedback to participants during the PROFITT pilot project. “The broad skill set that can be gleaned from the PROFITT curriculum is pretty astonishing. The small business management and soft skills materials, coupled with the computer training, are exactly what we need to see provided to offenders everywhere,” said Mr. Jackson.

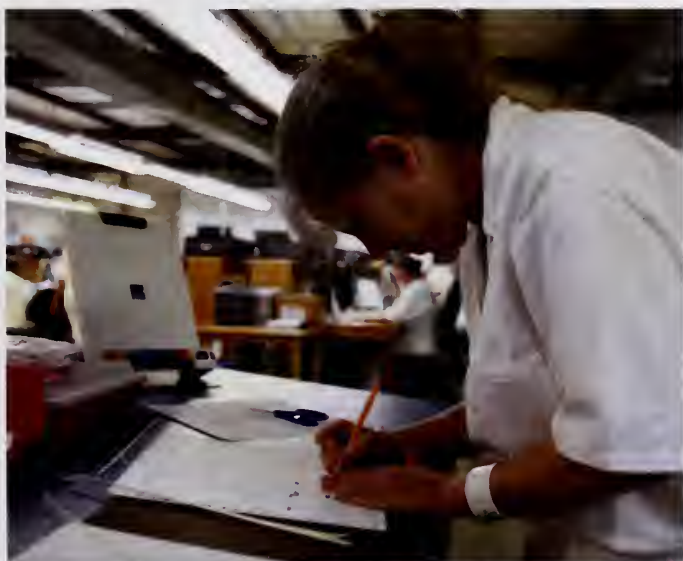
PROFITT Curriculum Distribution: Spreading Re-Entry Success

The PROFITT curriculum is currently being reviewed for approval by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. Upon approval, it will be made available for distribution nationwide, and project staff will be available to assist correctional facilities with guidance on implementation thereafter. Our goal is for braille units and Correctional Industries across the country to take advantage of the PROFITT curriculum to supplement and enhance existing programs, start new programs, and provide us feedback on where the individual tracks may be improved. Even though the curriculum will be finalized within the grant period, the PROFITT curriculum is intended to serve as a "work in progress" since changes in technology will demand it be updated periodically. Likewise, project staff emphasized flexibility in the curriculum design, which ensures that any correctional facility can implement the curriculum as best suits their individual facility needs and structure. Tracks of the curriculum may be extracted and utilized separately in any correctional industry or

vocational training area. Interested correctional facilities and industries should contact PROFITT staff to obtain curriculum tracks. Updates and additional information can be found at www.profitf.gatech.edu.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2010-RV-BX-005 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The BJA is a component of the OJP, which also includes the BJS, the NIJ, the OJJDP, the SMART Office, and the OVC. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not represent the official position or policies of the United States Department of Justice.

For more information on PROFITT, please contact: Patrick Fraser, Program Coordinator, Providing Real Opportunities for Income through Technology (PROFITT), Alternative Media Access Center (AMAC), Georgia Institute of Technology, (404)894-8000, patrick.fraser@amac.gatech.edu



A transcriber at TDCJ's Mountain View Unit creating a tactile graphic

COMING SOON!

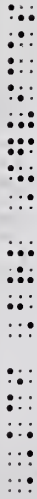
CI DIRECTOR TRAINING

////// SPONSORED BY NIC

NOVEMBER 27-30, 2012

AURORA, CO

Mark your calendars now for the first Post-Pilot CI Director Training to be held November 27-30, 2012, at the NIC Academy in Aurora, CO! Registration will be available on NIC's website-- look for the announcement soon from NIC and NCIA!



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E-Mail: nlacewell@aph.org



Did You Know?

- Braille was invented in France in 1824 by a 15-year old named Louis Braille.
- Braille is a system of 6 raised dots arranged into patterns that represent numbers, letters, words, part-words and punctuation marks.

⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h		
i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p		
q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x		
y	z								



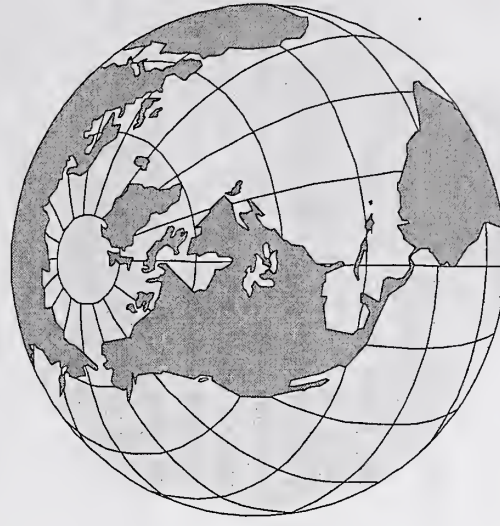
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KCI

BRAILLE SERVICES

*Putting the World at Your
Fingertips!*



KCI BRAILLE SERVICES

The Kentucky Correctional Industries Braille Services program is located in the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women (KCIW) just outside of Louisville, Ky. KCIW is a multi-security level women's prison that houses approximately 700 inmates.

KCI Braille Services began in 2000 as a joint effort between KCIW, the American Printing House for the Blind, and Kentucky Correctional Industries (KCI).

Since opening, KCI Braille Services has transcribed over fifty textbooks and numerous other materials, totaling over thirty million pages of braille.

The program is designed to provide high quality education materials for people who are blind and visually impaired and to teach inmates a marketable job skill that will help make their transition into society successful. In addition to braille, inmates learn responsibility, work ethics and communication skills. They learn how to work as a team by sharing work on projects and mentoring each other.



Perkins Braillewriter in use.



An inmate creating a tactile graphic.

The program employs up to fifteen transcribers and up to ten production floor team members. All transcribers are required to have a high school diploma or GED, at least five years time to serve, a good institutional record and some typing/computer skills. All transcribers are also required to complete the National Library of Congress (NLS) Literary Braille Transcription certification course before they may begin working.

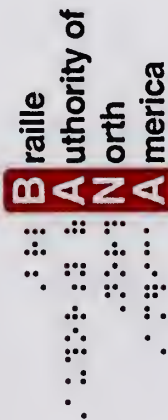
Once Literary Braille certified, additional certification courses are available in Nemeth (math and science notation) and Music from NLS and Textbook Formatting from The National Braille Association (NBA). Group training sessions are held regularly to train transcribers in quality control, scanning, embossing, proofreading, tactile graphics, computer technology and to keep transcribers up-to-date on new formatting.

KCI BRAILLE TRANSCRIBER STATISTICS

	Trainees	Certified
NLS Literary:	3	9
NLS Nemeth:	2	1
NLS Music:	2	1
NBA Textbook Formats:	3	0

SERVICES AVAILABLE

- **Literary Braille:**
 - Novels
 - Brochures
 - Menus
 - Reports
 - Invitations
 - Legal forms
 - Letters
 - Magazines
 - Cookbooks
 - Forms/Applications
 - Handbooks
 - Instruction manuals
 - Newsletters
 - Advertisements
 - Bible Studies
 - Schedules/Agendas
 - PowerPoint presentations
 - Children's Books
- **Textbook Braille:**
 - Textbooks
 - Worksheets
 - Test materials
 - Workbooks
- **Music:**
 - Sheet music
 - Music Theory books
- **Nemeth:**
 - Math books
 - Science books
- **Miscellaneous:**
 - Calendars
 - Business Cards
 - Puzzle Books
 - Maps
 - Diagrams
 - Playing Cards
 - Games
 - Greeting cards
 - Charts/Graphs
 - Illustrations
- **Binding:**
 - Comb
 - Print Covers
 - Plastic Covers
 - Stapling
 - Print Labels
 - Braille Labels
- **Foreign Language**
- **Scanning**
- **Thermoforming**
- **Proofreading**
- **Embossing**



BRaille AUTHORITY OF NORTH AMERICA

The mission of the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) is to assure literacy for tactile readers through standardization of braille and/or tactile graphics. BANA is composed of agencies and organizations concerned with reading, producing, transcribing, and teaching braille, and its Board is comprised of one member from each organization. BANA works largely through committees made up of transcribers, braille readers, education and rehabilitation professionals, and Board Members. These committees work to update the braille codes, formats, and techniques as well as to carry out the on-going business of BANA.

Who We Are

The Braille Authority of North America is made up of the member organizations shown below. One representative of each member organization serves on the BANA Board. The member organizations of BANA are:

Full Members:

- Alternate Text Production Center, California Community Colleges
- American Council of the Blind
- American Foundation for the Blind
- American Printing House for the Blind
- Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind & Visually Impaired
- Associated Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Braille Institute of America
- California Transcribers and Educators for the Blind & Visually Impaired
- The Cloverbook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind)
- Horizons for the Blind
- National Braille Association
- National Braille Press, Inc.
- National Federation of the Blind
- National Library Service for the Blind & Physically Handicapped

Associate Members:

- Braille Authority of New Zealand Aotearoa Trust
- Crawford Technologies
- T-Base Communications

BANA Publications provide the standards for producing braille in the various formats such as:

English Braille, American Edition (literary braille)

Braille Formats: Principles of Print to Braille Transcription (braille textbooks)

Nemeth Code for Mathematics & Science Notation

Music Braille Code

How BANA Serves

BANA works largely through committees composed of transcribers, braille readers, education and rehabilitation professionals, and Board Members. These committees are charged with updating the braille codes, formats, and techniques as well as the on-going business of BANA. Changes to the braille codes may be suggested by readers, transcribers, and producers. Committees of the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) are:

- Braille Formats Technical Committee
- Braille Research Committee
- Computer Braille Technical Committee
- Crafts and Hobbies Technical Committee
- Mathematics Braille Technical Committee
- Music Braille Technical Committee
- Publications Committee
- Refreshable Braille Technical Committee
- Tactile Graphics Technical Committee
- Ad Hoc Committee on Braille Signage & Labeling
- Ad Hoc Committee on Early Literacy Materials Production
- Ad Hoc Committee on English Braille, American Edition
- Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Language Materials
- Ad Hoc Committee on Standardized Tests
- Ad Hoc Committee on Uncontracted Braille

Learning about BANA's Work

Want to stay up to date with BANA's work? *BANA-Announce* is a one-way **email list** that disseminates official BANA information. To join this listserv, send a blank email message to bana-announce-subscribe@brailleauthority.org and follow the directions in the confirmation email that will be sent in response.

Contact BANA

Frances Mary D'Andrea, Chairperson
Braille Authority of North America
5714 Beacon Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
E-mail: literacy2@mindspring.com

For additional resources and information, visit: www.brailleauthority.org

For further details about BANA, please see the article "BANA In Brief" on the BANA website.

Will a Federal Prisoner Steal Your Job?

By ALAN FARNHAM
Sept. 19, 2012

abcnews.go.com

New Authority Lets Dirt-Cheap Prison Labor Compete With US Companies

It's hard to compete with workers willing to take pay as low as 23 cents an hour. Do we mean workers in Mexico or China? No. We mean Americans in federal prisons.

An Alabama clothing-maker recently found out just how hard, according to the Myrtle Beach Sun-News: American Apparel of Selma had to lay off 225 workers after it lost a contract for U.S. Army jackets to UNICOR, a \$900 million behemoth with 89 factories around the U.S. Its workforce consists entirely of convicts.

If you thought prisoners made only license plates, think again.

UNICOR's workers, according to the government-owned corporation's website, make custom draperies and curtains, mattresses and bedding; furniture, lighting systems, catwalks; fences, towels, shelving, eyewear (both safety and prescription), and trophies. They run help desks and call centers. They process credit cards and provide fleet management services. Oh, and they make license plates.

Federal law requires government agencies to buy products from UNICOR without competitive bidding.

The company, also known as Federal Prison Industries (FPI), is enjoying the kind of growth that might make some for-profit companies envious. Created by Congress in 1932, it historically has been forbidden from selling goods and services to any customers except federal agencies and departments (e.g., UNICOR-made jackets to the Army). But company spokesperson Julie Rozier explains to ABC News that these strictures have lately been relaxed.

"In December, we obtained new authorities," she says. "Under very limited circumstances, if an item is being made off-shore, we can compete for that."

In some cases, UNICOR now can manufacture and sell items to private customers in competition with private companies. The list of permissible items, Rozier says, includes tents, aprons, fabric shopping bags and baseball caps.

Congressman Bill Huizenga, Republican of Michigan, is one critic among many who find the situation outrageous. "Somehow, we have landed in the middle of Oz," he says, referring to the private sector's loss of jobs to a government-owned conglomerate that pays its workers between 23 cents and \$1.15 an hour.

At a time when unemployment is running above 8 percent, he says, "It's got people scratching their heads and wondering, 'How did we ever get into this?'"

As for UNICOR's using criminals to process credit card transactions, Huizenga says, "Giving criminals credit card data? Let's put the gas can closer to the fire."

Legislation he has introduced—H.R. 3634—seeks not to do away with UNICOR but to reign it in. It would subject the company's contracts, for example, to competitive bidding. Prison workers would be subject to OSHA and all the other workplace rules and costs that apply to private employers. Prisoners' salaries, over time, would rise to the minimum wage.

The net effect, he says, would be a leveling of the playing field.

Support for the bill, he says has been "very bipartisan." It has some 20 co-sponsors, including Republican Senator John Thune and Democratic Representatives Carolyn Maloney and Barney Frank. "There isn't much that Chairman Frank and I agree on," says Huizenga, "but we agree on this. We're hoping to get something done in the lame-duck session."

National Prison Braille Forum

October 10, 2012

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Attachments: 2012 PB Roster alpha 100212 FINAL.doc; Feedback form 101612.doc



Memo to 2012 National Prison Braille Forum Participants

Nancy Lacewell and Becky Snider

It was such a pleasure seeing each of you at the 12th annual Forum last week in Louisville! Learning about what you've all accomplished during the past year is always an inspiration. Whether you're trying to launch a prison braille program, expand your facility to include more accessible media, or starting your own business, your dedication and effort always motivates us to work harder at spreading the word nationally about the positive energy produced every day in prison braille programs across the country. Thanks so much for taking the time out of your very busy schedules to attend the Forum this year, and thanks for our annual dose of support and encouragement.

It would be wonderful if we could meet more often! While that may not be practical, the roster of Forum participants (including contact information) is attached to help you continue building relationships with members of the National Prison Braille Network.

Please take a few more minutes to complete the attached feedback form and send it back to us. We want to know if your time at the Forum this year was well spent, and how we could improve this day-long conference in the years to come.

In talking with several of you during our break time, the idea of having panel discussions at upcoming Forums was mentioned more than once. To determine your interest, we've listed a few potential groups on the feedback form and we'd like to know what you think about hosting panel discussions of wardens and corrections professionals, prison braille program graduates, braille and other accessible media customers (people who are blind and visually impaired), and others you may want to suggest. If you would like to attend such a program, what do you want to hear from the panelists? Please list topics of interest.

We are determined to spend more time during the coming year updating our prison braille website (www.aph.org/pbf) with information about National Prison Braille Network programs and people. Please check out the website and send us suggestions for improvement, as well as articles and photos that we can post for all to see. When we update the website, we will send all Network members a "heads up" to check it out.

Once again, thank you for traveling to Louisville for the National Prison Braille Forum last week. The unique perspective and experience you brought to the group helped us all appreciate the tremendous impact that prison braille programs have on participants and the blind and visually impaired people we all serve.

Keep in touch!

Sent by:

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Moving Forward...

2012 National Prison Braille Forum Feedback Form

Was your time at the 2012 Prison Braille Forum well spent? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what was most valuable to you? For instance, what kind of information or contacts did you pick up that will be useful to you in your daily work or in planning for the future?

What did you learn of particular interest in the presentations listed below?

PROFITT: Providing Real Opportunities For Income Through Technology
Tamara Rorie

Reflections of a Prison Braille Program Founder and Coordinator
Marie Amerson

MAMP: Miami Accessible Media Project
Robert Eutz

DIAGRAM Center and POET Software
Fred Slone

(continued on next page)

What areas of focus (such as technology or tactile graphics) would you like to learn more about at a future forum?

How can we improve the National Prison Braille Forum in years to come?

It has been suggested that future forums include panel presentations/discussions.

(1) Indicate which of the following groups you would be interested in asking to participate, and (2) list the topics/questions would you like panelists to address.

Wardens and corrections professionals

Prison braille program graduates

People who are blind/visually impaired, particularly regarding their use of materials produced in prison braille programs

Other suggested groups and topics:

(continued on next page)

If you took the tour of KCI Braille Services, describe that experience. Do you have ideas for improving KCI Braille Services? Do you have suggestions for future tours of this program?

National Prison Braille Network (NPBN): How can the NPBN be of help to you, the prison braille program(s) you work with, and the men/women in the program(s)?

Additional comments:

Thank you for taking time to express your thoughts!

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